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§ 689.3 Actions.

(a) Possible final actions listed in this paragraph (a) for guidance range from minimal restrictions (Group I) to the most severe and restrictive (Group III). They are not exhaustive and do not include possible criminal sanctions.

(1) *Group I actions.* (i) Send a letter of reprimand to the individual or institution.

(ii) Require as a condition of an award that for a specified period an individual or institution obtain special prior approval of particular activities from NSF.

(iii) Require for a specified period that an institutional official other than those guilty of misconduct certify the accuracy of reports generated under an award or provide assurance of compliance with particular policies, regulations, guidelines, or special terms and conditions.

(2) *Group II actions.* (i) Totally or partially suspend an active award, or restrict for a specified period designated activities or expenditures under an active award.

(ii) Require for a specified period special reviews of all requests for funding from an affected individual or institution to ensure that steps have been taken to prevent repetition of the misconduct.

(iii) Require a correction to the research record.

(3) *Group III actions.* (i) Terminate an active award.

(ii) Prohibit participation of an individual as an NSF reviewer, advisor, or consultant for a specified period.

(iii) Debar or suspend an individual or institution from participation in Federal programs for a specified period after further proceedings under applicable regulations.

(b) In deciding what final actions are appropriate when misconduct is found, NSF officials should consider:

(1) How serious the misconduct was;

(2) The degree to which the misconduct was knowing, intentional, or reckless;

(3) Whether it was an isolated event or part of a pattern;

(4) Whether it had a significant impact on the research record, research subjects, other researchers, institutions or the public welfare; and

(5) Other relevant circumstances.

(c) Interim actions may include, but are not limited to:

(1) Totally or partially suspending an existing award;

(2) Suspending eligibility for Federal awards in accordance with debarment-and-suspension regulations;

(3) Proscribing or restricting particular research activities, as, for example, to protect human or animal subjects;

(4) Requiring special certifications, assurances, or other, administrative arrangements to ensure compliance with applicable regulations or terms of the award;

(5) Requiring more prior approvals by NSF;

(6) Deferring funding action on continuing grant increments;

(7) Deferring a pending award;

(8) Restricting or suspending participation as an NSF reviewer, advisor, or consultant.

(d) For those cases governed by the debarment and suspension regulations, the standards of proof contained in the debarment and suspension regulations shall control. Otherwise, NSF will take no final action under this section without a finding of misconduct supported by a preponderance of the relevant evidence.

§ 689.4 Role of awardee institutions.

(a) Awardee institutions bear primary responsibility for prevention and detection of research misconduct and for the inquiry, investigation, and adjudication of alleged research misconduct. In most instances, NSF will rely on awardee institutions to promptly:

(1) Initiate an inquiry into any suspected or alleged research misconduct;

(2) Conduct a subsequent investigation, if warranted;

(3) Take action necessary to ensure the integrity of research, the rights and interests of research subjects and the public, and the observance of legal requirements or responsibilities; and